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## **TEXAS HEALTH CARE FRAUD AND OPIOID TAKEDOWN RESULTS IN CHARGES AGAINST 58 INDIVIDUALS**

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department announced today a coordinated health care fraud enforcement operation across the state of Texas, involving charges against a total of 58 individuals across all four federal districts in Texas for their alleged involvement in Medicare fraud schemes and networks of “pill mill” clinics resulting in \$66 million in loss and 6.2 million pills. Of those charged, 16 were doctors or medical professionals, and 20 were charged for their role in diverting opioids.

Today’s enforcement actions were led and coordinated by the Health Care Fraud Unit of the Criminal Division’s Fraud Section in conjunction with its Medicare Fraud Strike Force (MFSF) partners. The MFSF is a partnership among the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney’s Offices, the FBI, Health and Human Services-Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). In addition, the operation includes the participation of the Veterans Affairs-OIG and the Department of Labor, various other federal law enforcement agencies and Texas State Medicaid Fraud Control Units.

The charges announced today aggressively target schemes billing Medicare, Medicaid, TRICARE (a health insurance program for members and veterans of the armed forces and their families), Department of Labor-Office of Worker’s Compensation Programs, and private insurance companies for medically unnecessary prescription drugs and compounded medications that often were never even purchased and/or distributed to beneficiaries. The charges also involve individuals contributing to the opioid epidemic, with a particular focus on medical professionals allegedly involved in the unlawful distribution of opioids and other prescription narcotics, a particular focus for the Department.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, approximately 115 Americans die every day of an opioid-related overdose.

Today’s arrests come three weeks after the Department announced that the Health Care Fraud Unit’s Houston Strike Force coordinated the filing of charges against dozens in a trafficking network responsible for diverting over 23 million oxycodone, hydrocodone and carisoprodol pills.

“Today’s charges highlight the amazing work being done by the Department’s Medicare Fraud Strike Force and our partners in Texas,” said Assistant Attorney General Brian A. Benczkowski of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division. “As we continue to dedica